

Documents on Diplomacy: Exercises

"The Big Thing" A Cartoon by Thomas Nast



1. Why is William Seward dressed as a woman?
2. The character in the chair is Uncle Sam, although his sore head represents the national pain caused by Andrew Johnson. He is shaking his fist at the person in the mirror? Who is that person?
3. Redding's Russia Salve really was a popular skin ointment during this era. What is Secretary Seward trying to do with the salve? What does it represent?
4. The map in the background reveals the views of the cartoonist, Thomas Nast, regarding the purchase of Alaska. What were his feelings? Cite examples from the map to justify your answer.
5. The picture on the wall reads, "ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES." What is Nast implying?
6. What is the tone of the cartoon?
7. Describe the possible reaction of William Seward to the cartoon. Would he have placed it on HIS wall?
8. If this cartoon represented the overwhelming mood of the country, would the purchase of Alaska have been praised or condemned? Explain.
9. What changes could be made in the cartoon to create an opposite opinion of the Alaska purchase?
10. What is the meaning of Nast's cartoon title? Create another title to reflect Nast's opinions.